

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PORT A 00732 012058Z
ACTION ARA-10

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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PORT AU PRINCE 0732

EO 11652 N/A
TAGS: PINT, HA
SUBJECT: HAITIAN CABINET CHANGES RUMORED

1. RUMORS OF AN IMPENDING HAITIAN CABINET SHUFFLE WHICH HAVE CIRCULATED PERSISTENTLY FOR SEVERAL WEEKS REACHED A NEW LEVEL OF INTENSITY IN THE LAST FEW DAYS. THE LAST CABINET CHANGES TOOK PLACE IN EARLY SEPTEMBER AND, SINCE PRESIDENT JEAN-CLAUDE DUVALIER'S CABINETS HAVE RARELY REMAINED INTACT FOR MUCH MORE THAN SIX MONTHS, WE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED TO SEE SOME PORTFOLIOS CHANGE HANDS IN THE COMING WEEKS. THE LAST CHANGES WERE REPLASTERING AFTER THE DISMISSAL OF REGIE DU TABAC DIRECTOR SICLAIT, AND THE PRESIDENT PROBABLY FEELS THE NEED TO RESTRUCTURE THE CABINET IN WAYS RENOUNCING THE VESTIGES OF SICLAIT'S INFLUENCE.

2. THE MINISTRIES MOST VULNERABLE TO CHANGE APPEAR TO BE FOREIGN AFFAIRS, EDUCATION, INTERIOR AND NATIONAL DEFENSE, AND PUBLIC WORKS. INFORMATION AND AGRICULTURE ARE ALSO SUBJECTS OF SPECULATION. THE LOCAL BETTING HAS FOREIGN MINISTER EDNER BRUTUS BEING RETIRED AND REPLACED BY JUSTICE MINISTER AURELIEN JEANTY (ALTHOUGH INFORMATION MINISTER PIERRE GOUSSE HAS BEEN PUSHING HARD FOR THE FOREIGN MINISTRY). RAOUL PIERRE-LOUIS AT EDUCATION IS GENERALLY THOUGHT TO HAVE BEEN DISAPPOINTING AND HIS

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PREDECESSOR JEAN MONTES-LEFRANC IS BEING TOUTED FOR A COMEBACK, AS IS PIERRE PETIT TO REPLACE HIS UNDISTINGUISHED SUCCESSOR FRENAND LAURIN AT PUBLIC WORKS (A PETIT COMEBACK WOULD BE WIDELY ACCLAIMED). FOR INTERIOR AND NATIONAL DEFENSE, ULRICK ST. LOUIS, DIRECTOR OF THE GOVERNMENT'S DAILY NOUVEAU MONDE, IS TIPPED TO SUCCEED PIERRE BIAMBY. LISE-ANNE PROSPER HERARD MAY ALSO MOVE FROM UNDER-SECRETARY

TO SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SOCIAL AFFAIRS, REPLACING ACHILLE
SALVANT WHOSE UNINTERRUPTED CABINET SERVICE GOES WELL BACK
INTO THE ERA OF FRANCOIS DUVALIER.

3. OF GREATEST INTEREST TO THE UNITED STATES ARE THE PER-
SISTENT REPORTS THAT BRUTUS IS ON HIS WAY OUT AS FOREIGN
MINISTER. JEANTY IS NOT PERHAPS THE IDEAL SUCCESSOR BECAUSE,
LIKE BRUTUS, HE HAS LITTLE FACILITY WITH ENGLISH AND LITTLE
PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF THE UNITED STATES (ALTHOUGH HE WAS
ENCHANTED BY A 1976 VISIT TO WASHINGTON AND APPRECIATIVE OF
BRIEFINGS RECEIVED AT THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT). JEANTY APPEARS
TO ENJOY A GOOD DEAL OF CONFIDENCE WITH THE PRESIDENT, HOWEVER,
IS HARD-WORKING, AND WOULD RUN A MORE VIGOROUS --AND ASSERTIVE--
MINISTRY THAN BRUTUS. WITH HIS LEGAL BACKGROUND HE WOULD
ALSO BE A SKILLFUL ADVOCATE OF HIS COUNTRY'S POSITION
AND TENACIOUS IN DEBATE. OUR EXPERIENCE WITH HIM
SUGGESTS SO FAR THAT HE MAY BE LESS RECEPTIVE TO THE
U.S. POINT OF VIEW THAN BRUTUS. HOWEVER, ONCE HE GRASPS
AN ISSUE, HE SHOULD BE ABLE TO INTERPRET THE POLICY
IMPLICATIONS TO THE PRESIDENT IN PRACTICAL, RELEVANT,
AND COGENT TERMS. HAITI COULD DO MUCH WORSE.
ISHAM

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